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SANTA FE RAILROAD,
SANITARY AND SHIP CANAL BRIDGE
I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor
Crossing the Sanitary and Ship Canal,
East of Harlem Avenue
Chicago
Cook County
Illinois

HAER No. IL-39

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
SANTA FE RAILROAD, SANITARY AND SHIP CANAL BRIDGE
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Location: I & M Canal National Heritage Corridor
Crossing the Sanitary and Ship Canal,
east of Harlem Avenue
Chicago, Cook County, Illinois

UTM: 16 E.434600 N.4628250
Quad: Berwyn

Date of Construction: 1899

Builder: Substructure: Keystone Bridge Company
Superstructure: Carnegie Steel Company

Present Owner: Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad

Present Use: Railroad Bridge

Significance: This bridge is one of seven surviving
swing bridges built in 1899 across the
Sanitary and Ship Canal.

Project Information: The Illinois and Michigan Canal was
designated a National Heritage Corridor
in 1984. The following year HABS/HAER
embarked on an extensive inventory and
documentation project of the 100-mile
length of the corridor. Field work for
this project was concluded in 1987.
Final editing and photographic
documentation was completed in 1992.

Historians: Frances Alexander, Charles Scott, and
John Nicolay, 1986; Carolyn Brucken,
1992.

In 1892 the Sanitary District of Chicago began one of the largest earth moving projects in the history of municipal public works. The twenty-eight mile-long Sanitary and Ship Canal, also called the Chicago Drainage Canal, reversed the flow of the Chicago River and discharged water drawn from Lake Michigan into the DesPlaines River at Lockport. In 1899 the Sanitary District of Chicago supervised the building of this bridge to carry the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad across the newly constructed Chicago Drainage Canal. The Keystone Bridge Company of Pittsburgh fabricated the steel for the pin-connected Pratt through truss, and the Carnegie Steel Company, Ltd., erected the superstructure. The bridge was placed in operation in April 1899. It is nearly identical to the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad bridge crossing the Chicago Drainage Canal in Lemont; both bridges are still in use.

The Santa Fe span east of Harlem Avenue is a center-pivot swing bridge and measures 372'-6" in length. The superstructure consists of a steel, pin-connected Pratt through truss, and it rests on ashlar limestone abutments. The ashlar limestone center pier is capped with concrete. The center pier measures 33'-8" in diameter and supports a 28'-0" diameter turntable. The bridge carries two tracks.

SOURCES:

"Bridges Over the Chicago Drainage Canal," Engineering Record, v. 36 (June 19, 1897): 53.

"Railway Drawbridges Over the Chicago Drainage Canal," Engineering News, v. 38 (December 2, 1897): 363-366.

Isham Randolph, "The Salient Features of the Chief Engineer's Annual Report of the Drainage Canal of the Sanitary District of Chicago for 1898," Journal of the Western Society of Engineers, v. 4 (August 1899): 317-334.

"Swing Bridges on the Chicago Drainage Canal," Engineering Record, v. 36 (October 2, 1897), 378; v. 36 (October 30, 1897), 469; v. 37 (December 25, 1897), 71-73; v. 37 (March 19, 1898): 338-339.

C. Arch Williams, The Sanitary District of Chicago: History of its Growth and Development (Chicago: The Sanitary District of Chicago: 1919).